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C H A R G E

DELIVERED TO THE

C L E R G Y

AT THE

PRIMARY VISITATION

OF

K Bagot

LEWIS, LORD BISHOP OF

N O R W I C H.

MDCCLXXXIV.

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A
C H A R G E
TO THE CLERGY
OF THE DIOCESE OF
N O R W I C H.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE Church of England, with that wisdom End and Im-
portance of
Visitations.
and piety, that earnest attention to give
full effect to the Gospel of Christ which marks
all her determinations, enjoins that a strict ac-
count be taken from time to time of the state of
Religion, and all religious matters as far as her
influence extends.—It concerns all who are en-
gaged, either in taking or rendering this ac-
count, to do it with the utmost seriousness, sin-
cerity, and freedom.—To proceed lightly or
partially in such a business, is trifling with the
dearest interests of mankind; with God and
our own consciences.

b

I know

I know men are apt to consider solemn occasions that recur frequently as matters of mere form ; and therefore think themselves warranted in treating them with indifference, or even disrespect. It should be remembered that Forms may be, and often are founded in wisdom and lead to the best ends—nay, that no important business can be well or effectually provided for without them.—That undistinguishing contempt of them, therefore, which characterizes the present age, may be conceit, may be folly, may be worse—but it cannot be good sense.—Where men have adopted such a prejudice, if they could be persuaded to sift their own principles to the bottom, they would, generally speaking, find that their objection lay not to the form, but to the reality, the very substance of the matter in question.—In religious concerns we well know it hath been the constant practice of Infidelity from the earliest ages to the present hour, to attempt the ruin of Religion itself, by pretended attacks on its formalities.—Whether the Business we are now concerned in, shall be a Form only without power or effect, it rests with ourselves to determine. The Inquiry is direct, clear, and pertinent ; if the answers, as I trust they are, be so too—we shall

shall then know what is right and what is amiss among us. But we must not stop here. Such knowledge will confirm the mischief, and lead only to our condemnation, making us partakers in other men's Sins ; if it do not excite our utmost exertion and zeal in the use of the best means of correction properly within our power.

HAVING said thus much concerning the nature and importance of the occasion which hath now assembled us, I shall employ it farther in laying before you a few observations suggested by the complexion of the Time in which we live. In doing this, and in stating the proper application to the established Ministers of Religion, I shall use that freedom and openness which seem best suited to my station, and the exigence of the case.

COMPARATIVE views of the state of manners in one age and another, have been commonly drawn to the disadvantage of the present. This naturally enough raises some suspicion of a degree of partiality and unfairness. Men the most justly liable to censure, for want of better defence are always ready to shelter themselves in a croud of examples : however

View of general Depravity of Manners.

bad they may be, if they can shew they are no worse than many others who have already passed, or perhaps are now passing their Life without much infamy, they think themselves tolerably justified, at least, as far as the world and their worldly interests are concerned ; and that is all they take into account.

WITHOUT indulging a gloomy or censorious humour one may safely assert that the most of us here present have lived long enough to see and observe a very amazing alteration in the manners of this Kingdom. For this purpose it is necessary to look back a very little way indeed. Respect and deference to authorities are sunk almost to nothing.—Religious observances are not only slackly attended, but spoken of with contempt and derision. The Sabbath is but little distinguished from the rest of the week ; in no circumstance so much as in the greater prevalence of licentious idleness and vice.—Domestic ties, even the most sacred, are continually violated ; and the peace of families sacrificed to brutal passion. Men are grown effeminate by habits of selfish indulgence ; and the modest reserve, which not many years ago was regarded as the chief and most engaging ornament

ornament of the other sex, has given way to forward assurance and unremitted dissipation.— I might go on—but the task is painful; and your own experience will teach you to supply and fill up these faint outlines.

INGENIOUS and speculative men have assigned various causes for this rapid change: Sudden influx of wealth; extended commerce; new modes of education; more easy and general communication with the Metropolis; more familiar intercourse with our foreign neighbours, among whom a determined philosophic Infidelity hath taken advantage of the weakness of a Religion, obscured and rendered contemptible by human absurdities and innovations. It is probable that all or most of these causes may have contributed something in their several places and proportions to the evils complained of.—But be it remembered, that the moral character both of states and individuals, depends entirely on their Religion. Circumstanced as human nature is, Ethics, considered as forming a rule of life independently of Religion, are mere vanity and presumption. It concerns us therefore, very seriously, as guardians of the established Faith, to consider whether our

Causes of it,

State of Religion the principal Cause.

own

own conduct be not, in some degree, chargeable with the blame of this increased wickedness.—I know how forward the world is to censure the Clergy, and in general with how little regard to propriety and justice they do it. Would we effectually blunt the edge of their calumnies, we must rigidly censure and correct ourselves.

Clergy in some
Measure ac-
countable for
it.

WITHOUT searching after other and more remote causes, which we certainly cannot remove, we may and ought to ask ourselves this question, and press it home on our consciencies individually: “Is it possible that these mis-
“ chiefs could have grown so quickly and to so
“ formidable an height, if every Clergyman
“ throughout the kingdom in his proper de-
“ partment, from the highest to the lowest,
“ had watched the occasion as he ought to have
“ done; had felt and exerted that zeal for the
“ cause of Religion, and for the most valuable
“ interests of mankind, which the Gospel re-
“ quires at his hands; and which he has per-
“ sonally stipulated to that particular Church
“ of which he is a minister, in the most solemn
“ and express terms?”—To this question I fear
there is but one answer to be given. So far
therefore

therefore we must take blame to ourselves; so far we have in conscience an awful account to render both to God and our country. This account, depend upon it, will not be mended by excuses and palliations. The best chance we have of making matters better is from a candid and impartial review of our own conduct and situation.

INSTANCES of Clergymen of the Church of England, men of grossly immoral character, are, I trust, very rare; have in all times been very rare indeed; so rare that the Order may fairly be said to stand quit of the imputation. Of misconduct in that kind among you I cannot harbour a suspicion: much less should I give it a place in this public Address.—But what does our exemption from this charge amount to?—Simply this: that we are not the most false and most detestable of all men living. We cannot surely rest satisfied with this lowest point of negative praise. A great deal is positively incumbent on us—What account can we give of ourselves in these matters? Men will be apt to think slightly of a Religion, when the Ministers and Teachers of it are deficient, and careless, and indifferent in the discharge of their known and proper

per duties. We cannot pass unnoticed in any the slightest neglect. Every Libertine knows what the duty of a Clergyman is. Our Church hath wisely provided that it should be so. And it would be well if every one of us, instead of seeking for excuses and evasions, never past a week without pressing on our own minds the solemn engagements we are under.

Residence.

THE first object for a Parochial Minister is to reside with his flock as constantly as may be ; to watch over them incessantly, as a good and faithful Shepherd. Such is the nature of his Commission. The arguments on this topic are too obvious, have been too often and too well insisted on, to leave occasion for me to trouble you with them at this time. There are, I am sensible, situations and circumstances which may be fairly pleaded in excuse for a less rigid punctuality in this respect ; and the mild temper of our Laws leaves room for equitable allowance in such cases. A good man, however, and a good Christian, will always be backward in availing himself of such indulgence, even where he may : and if he do it at all, he will take care that it shall be to the least extent possible ; and that his necessary absence shall be supplied

supplied in such sort as to make it scarcely felt. Where there is not a scrupulous anxiety in all this matter, but excuses are greedily caught at, and the indulgence stretched to the utmost, for the sake of a pleasanter country, more, and more chearful society, with readier means of dissipation and amusement, in that case the cause of Religion is abandoned, is sacrificed to paltry motives; to personal indulgence and gratification. The world see it, and know it: the serious part of them condemn us most justly, and the profligate make our misconduct an argument for their own impieties and infidelity.

Nothing can in reason or propriety be considered as Residence, but actually living in the very Parish where your Duty lies. Of late years a practice hath been growing in many parts of the kingdom (and no where doth it prevail more than in this Diocese) of a very hurtful tendency. I mean the resort of the Clergy to the most considerable neighbouring Town. It is within a moderate ride of their church: they can live there more conveniently, and perhaps at less charge: they are at hand to perform at all times both the stated and occasional duty.—The stated and occasional duty! Good God!

is this their care, their anxious concern for the souls of those, of whom they are to give account to their Redeemer?—How many occasions do they thus lose where a single word, perhaps, might rescue a poor wretch from sin and misery.—Where is the influence of their example? How can they thus make the lives of themselves and their families wholesome patterns for the flock of Christ? What becomes of that unceasing and chearful exercise of kind and benevolent actions, which is the very spirit and fruit of our religion? How can they allay little differences, and promote peace and good-will and good humour in their parish? and many other matters which can only be provided for by constant intercourse and communication?—I would not be thought to speak flightingly of your *stated and occasional* duties—They are both important in a very high degree. But even these will always be performed in a much more edifying and affecting manner by an inmate; who knows correctly the characters of his whole flock, their habits of thinking and acting, their strength and weakness, their wants and their abundance; than by a mere visitant for the purpose, whose voice indeed is known, but his zeal and affection most questionable.

THE

THE ordinary plea for Non-residence arising from narrowness and insufficiency of maintenance, I am ready to admit hath more foundation in this Diocese, than in most other parts of the kingdom—more than can consist with that full and exact discharge of the ministerial duty, which, for the sake of religion, is always to be wished.—This is, indeed, a serious difficulty for us.—Let us be careful, however, to make the best of it; and, instead of sheltering our particular negligence under the cloak of a general excuse, endeavour that as much may be done as the nature of our case will admit.—If the Parishes are many, they are likewise small, and in comparison with some parts of the kingdom thinly inhabited.

HENCE it hath happened that Consolidations have so frequently taken place among us. Consolidations. There are still, perhaps, cases where the same expedient might be used with advantage. In these cases the first object should be to provide for actual residence, and a more decent and edifying discharge of parochial duties.—For this purpose it seems necessary that the parishes should be so situated that they may, with propriety and effect, be considered as one. The

consent not only of the Ordinary and Patron should be had, but that of the Inhabitants likewise. ^A Unless they are disposed to unite, the purposes of Religion and public Worship will be ill forwarded by such means.

Personal
Unions.

ANOTHER remedy to the inconveniencies complained of, may occasionally be furnished from the prudent exercise of a legal though unusual Power resting in the hands of your Ordinary. I mean the power of granting *Personal Union*.—This is in its effect and operation much the same thing with that which, elsewhere requiring the consent of the Arch-Bishop and authority of the Great Seal, is called a *Dispensation*.^B It ought therefore to be considered as

^A Before the statute 37 Hen. VIII. c. 21. Union of Churches might be made by the common law of the church: and this power is neither taken away nor altered by the statute.

It was requisite that such union should be founded on certain specific reasons mentioned by the canonists, viz. *Quia Beneficia prius essent illegitime divisa, propter hospitalitatem, propter vicinitatem locorum, propter Parochianorum defectum, propter paupertatem seu exilitatem.*

To authenticate these grounds it is reasonable and expedient that previous enquiry be made; and the Parishioners themselves called upon to object if they think proper.

^B That a grant of Personal Union does every thing for which a Dispensation can be wanted, is evident, because in consequence of this power, a Dispensation in this Diocese is never called for. There is this difference between them, that the Personal Union makes the two Benefices *one* for the time: By Dispensation the two Benefices still continuing distinct are permitted to be holden, notwithstanding the laws against Plurality.

as subject to the same canonical restrictions. For the Canon restrains generally the exercise of the power, without any notice of the person in whose hands it may chance to be lodged.—As this is a circumstance which appears not to have been always attended to—I think it expedient to take this opportunity of informing you once for all, that whatever may have been the practice heretofore in this matter, it is my fixed determination to abide in future by the rule of the Canon; with that latitude of interpretation respecting the distance which, from the present state of things, seems in reason and equity to be required. ^c

I CANNOT leave this topic without saying something of those Benefices which are commonly held without any Dispensation; and supposed

Voidable
Livings.

^c Can. xli. No Licence or Dispensation for the keeping of more Benefices with cure than one shall be granted to any, but such only as shall be thought very well worthy for his learning, and very well able and sufficient to discharge his duty; that is, who shall have taken the degree of a Master of Arts at the least in one of the Universities of this realm; and be a public and sufficient preacher licensed. Provided always that he be by a good and sufficient caution bound to make his personal residence in each his said Benefices for some reasonable time in every year; and that the said Benefices be not more than thirty miles distant asunder: And lastly, that he have under him in the Benefice where he doth not reside a preacher lawfully allowed, that is able sufficiently to teach and instruct the people,

supposed voidable at the will of the Ordinary or Patron.—The statute 21 Hen. VIII. c. 13. enacts, That “if any person having one Benefice with cure of soul, being of the yearly value of 8l. or upwards (i. e. in the King’s Books) and take *any* other with cure of soul, and be instituted and inducted in possession of the same, that then and immediately after such possession had thereof, the first Benefice shall be adjudged void.” Benefices under the value of 8l. are not included at all in this statute; they stand therefore as they did before on the ground of common and canon law.—By the constitution of the council of Lateran, every Benefice with cure of soul of whatever value, became *ipso jure* void on the acceptance of a second; and the Patron *might* present. And by the common law of England it is held, though the Patron *may* present if he will, yet no Lapse incurs unless the Bishop void the church by Sentence declaratory.—On this ground it is of mere connivance that these Livings continue to be holden in evasion of that law which alone affects them. I will not say that this connivance may not be used to good purpose as far as one Living goes, in this Diocese especially, where there are so many very small ones.—The charge

charge attending the act of Union (which by the way is here not very considerable) may be so saved, and that is all.—For that it is consistent on any construction with the sense and intention of the laws now in being, that one person should hold in any possible case, or by any authority whatever, more than ⁿ two Livings, I cannot admit. Still less can I think that the custom of thus accumulating distinct Benefices however small, can be a means of promoting the business of Religion among us, which is the only object that ought to be considered as justifiable ground for either seeking or granting Dispensation, connivance, or any other indulgence.

WHAT I have said applies to all Benefices with cure of souls, of every denomination—to *Perpetual Curacies* as well as others. It is absurd to say, that the mere mode of giving possession in which alone they differ, should make an alteration in this respect.—In this assertion I am supported by the opinion of able lawyers. I know how serious a question it is, considered in its whole extent, where men have long been

Perpetual
Curacies.

ⁿ This must be understood with the one exception in favour of Clergymen being Privy Counsellors, who are by the statute 21 Hen. VIII. c. 13. § 13. empowered to purchase licence or dispensation to take, receive and keep *three* Parsonages or Benefices with cure of soul.

been acting on a contrary supposition.—It is by no means my intention or wish to disturb the present possessions of any man—What I have said on the subject is purely directed as a caution in future.—And I am satisfied, if it be duly attended to, not only the property of Incumbents and right of Patrons will be secure, but the parish duty will in time be performed with more punctuality and effect than it is at present.

**Act for Re-
pairing and
re-building
Parsonage
Houses.**

ONE unhappy consequence of habitual Non-residence, hath been some times made an argument for continuing the practice: I mean the utter dilapidation of Parsonage Houses. For this grievance the Legislature hath now furnished us with an equitable and effectual remedy.—I am glad to see that advantage hath in some instances been already made of this law, even under the difficulties that have hitherto attended the raising of money on the terms it proposes. These difficulties it is to be hoped will soon be removed. The Governors of Queen Anne's bounty are empowered by the act to forward the money; they are disposed to do it—and will do it as soon as they can, without impeding in any degree the primary object of their trust.

trust. I should therefore hope, that more and more good effects would daily result from this salutary law.—It is hardly to be conceived that an Incumbent (I speak of cases where the thing is practicable at all) should consider himself as having even an option to proceed or not. His own interest and that of his family, as well as the common interests of christianity, require it at his hands.

THESE observations concern more especially the Beneficed Clergy, as they are themselves engaged in the actual ministry of their own parishes. As this cannot always be the case, great care is necessary in the supply of their personal absence by stipendiary Curates. Presuming that the state of the Diocese is not in this respect at present exactly what might be wished, without entering into particulars, or laying blame on any individual, I shall content myself with pointing out such circumstances as appear to me most important and most necessary to be attended to in this matter ; and make no doubt, that whatever is amiss, will soon be rectified, without farther interference. Wherever a man deposes another as his substitute or representative in any concern of moment, if he re-

gard his own character at all, he will be minutely inquisitive concerning the qualifications and merits, and special fitness of one whom he means so to depute. Where his own temporal concerns are at stake this will always be the case. Ought it not to be equally so in the execution of a great public charge or trust, either of a civil or religious nature? In the former instance he would not rest satisfied with the mere formality of a Testimonium, without knowing whether the persons attesting were competent to judge; or if they were so, whether they meant *bonâ fide* to certify the real character and pretensions of the person so recommended.—You know to what and to whom you stand pledged when you become the Minister of a Parish. It concerns you to make good your engagements, if you cannot do it in your own person, at least by your substitute. How can you be said to do this in any sense, if you are not thoroughly convinced of the sound faith, religious temper, and moral habits of your Curate. If you employ a man without this conviction, you shamefully betray your trust; and are become accountable to God and your country for the consequences.

THIS

THIS is incomparably the first object of attention. When you have found a man in all respects fit for the employment, the next thing to be considered is the payment for his services. This, no doubt, ought, if the nature and revenues of the Living will bear it, to be as much as will afford a decent and reputable maintenance of itself; such as may preclude a man from the necessity of looking out for other engagements, and means of subsistence elsewhere. Wherever it can be done, the Curate should be limited to the duties of one Parish, and made actually resident in it. It is much to be wished that this could be obtained in all cases; in this Diocese I am sensible it can but in few. A scanty and niggardly allowance is certainly disgraceful both to the Curate and his Employer. The Curate, if he be a man of merit and competent attainments, hath a right to value his services at an higher rate; and it is his duty to do so:—If he be not a man of such description, he ought not to be employed at any rate.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible to prescribe a certain and fixed rule in this respect, that may apply with propriety to all cases.—It is a much easier matter, with a moderate share

of discretion and generosity, to provide fitly for each particular case as it may arise. Thus much we may be sure of, that where Clergymen are driven to accumulate one Cure upon another beyond what any man can serve with decency and effect, there the accustomed stipend is less than in reason it ought to be.—I forbear to mention the abuses of this kind that have already come to my knowledge.—They are such as I am apt to think would exceed the belief of many of you : such as must, if not remedied, soon extirpate all serious sense of Religion and religious duties in those places where they prevail.

Licences to
Curates.

You will readily admit that no one ought to be employed in any Diocese as officiating Curate, without the knowledge and consent of the Ordinary. The reasons for this are sufficiently obvious—There is a regular method of communicating this knowledge and consent—namely, by Nomination and Licence.—It is absolutely required by the Canons—and why it hath not been more generally adopted I am at a loss to determine. It seems to me clearly for the interest both of the Incumbent and the Curate

rate that it should be.—The expence is so trifling that I can hardly think it is ever seriously urged as an argument against it.—But admitting that even trifle as it is, it may be an object to a poor Curate; the Incumbent may well make the matter easy to him. It is worth your while to consider a little the inconveniencies and absurdities that immediately arise where a Curate is employed without Licence.

IN the first place the Bishop hath no certain notoriety whether the Church be supplied at all.—The Incumbent who thinks he has devolved his charge on another, remains the only person accountable for all neglects and irregularities of Duty.—The Curate is amenable to nobody on that ground—Nay, he is in fact subject to Ecclesiastical censure every time he performs service in the church, if any body thinks proper to article against him.—If he be ever so deserving or punctual in what he hath undertaken, he is always removeable at the mere caprice of his Employer. He ^E has no remedy
whereby

^E For ought I know, considered as a mere hiring for service, and agreed for in the same form, it might be open to action at common law; but this is a light in which I cannot suppose the Ministry of any Clergyman to be considered either by himself or others.

whereby to recover his stipend if it be withheld from him; and can have no legal claim to it. On the other hand I do not see any inconvenience from every Curate in the Diocese being regularly licenced. Were this the case, one great advantage would certainly follow—there would be much less room for difficulty or collusion in the matter of Titles. The Bishop would then have only to ordain Ministers for the supply of his own Diocese; and his Diocese would be supplied chiefly by Clergy known and approved by himself.

Titles. You will none of you, I trust, inconsiderately grant Titles to any one. I feel myself under the strongest obligation to accept in future nothing in that shape but what is perfectly clear and unequivocal.—We are all seriously concerned in this caution.—It is almost the only means we have to keep worthless Intruders out of our fold.

Testimonials. A SCRUPULOSITY of the same kind and for nearly the same reasons, is requisite in setting your names to Testimonials, whether for Orders or Preferment. I well know that your friendship and your good-nature will sometimes press
you

you hard on this occasion. But for God's sake let not these private considerations induce you to impose upon me in a matter of so general concern ; so nearly affecting the cause of Religion, and the most valuable interests of mankind. It is prevaricating with yourselves to imagine that your own character is not pledged in the business.—Besides, your good-nature aims wide of its mark.—It is really no kindness in the end to assist in placing your friend in a situation where he will probably disgrace both you, himself and his whole order. Of sufficiency in learning, of soundness in religious tenets, I can more easily satisfy myself ; but for the tenor and habits of life, on which the most essential qualification depends, I must, for the most part, rely on your report ; and I shall do it with confidence and security till I find myself deceived.—I cannot but express my earnest wish that College Testimonials too were more scrupulously attended to, than I have reason to fear they commonly are. A remissness there is probably what has occasioned there being less attention paid to the matter in the country than it deserves. Sure I am, however, that if it were understood in every College that these certificates were somewhat more than matter of
mere

mere course—it would contribute more effectually than almost any other means that can be devised, to the furtherance of sound Religion, good learning, and good manners in both our Universities.

HAVING said as much as I have on the matter of Residence, and the means of making the dispensing with it in certain cases as little prejudicial as can be ; the next topic would lead me to say something of your own general conduct and deportment ; but I am unwilling to shew the slightest mark of diffidence in this respect on my first public appearance amongst you. It is my disposition to give men credit on all occasions for their conduct as honest and good men, 'till I see reason to think ill of them. I rely too on a like acceptance at your hands—though my best endeavours are, as I hope they will be, constantly exerted in your service, I am conscious they will still want all the allowance your candour and good-nature can afford.—It behoves us all to recollect that the times require a more than ordinary caution at our hands.—An attention even to trifling circumstances is now become of moment, if we wish to give that estimation to our Order, which is absolutely
necessary

necessary to insure its proper weight and influence. Many things may be lawful in themselves, and at another time might have been perfectly innocent, which are now utterly inexpedient and even dangerous. To enable us to do good we must be well esteemed and well spoken of. This estimation and repute will sometimes be governed by circumstances in themselves of inferior consideration; but on this account well worth attending to. There are other points of more serious concern, and which appear to me to affect deeply the moral character of all concerned in them.

I HAVE already intimated, that the Duty of a Clergyman is made notorious, and wisely made so, by public engagements. These engagements go not only to your anxious care and assiduity in instructing your flock, but to the points themselves which you are to teach them. For any man therefore, either to evade the great Doctrines which he hath solemnly engaged to teach, or to enforce private opinions inconsistent with them, is short of common honesty; is prevaricating with God and his own conscience. If his opinions on essential points are contrary to those declared and maintained in the Arti-

Faith and
Doctrine.

cles and public Service of the Church of England, in God's name let him openly avow his sentiments and quit his Profession. There have been recent instances of such conduct, to the shame of those who with the self same opinions, continue to hold advanced and lucrative stations in the Church, for the purpose of defaming and destroying it, which they modestly call Reformation; rating their own private conceit as the only possible standard of Truth.—These things concern every Clergyman as such.

Simony.

THERE is another question of equal notoriety, which applies particularly to beneficed Clergy.—It is known how solemnly they stipulate that they are free from all private bargain or agreement either expressly made or implied, in order to obtain the appointment to any particular Benefice. This I say is known; and if it be known at the same time that an understanding actually subsists (and it cannot subsist without being known) however advantageous such compliance may be to the proprietor and occupiers of the land, they must detest the principles of him who consented to it; and where that is the case, his instructions and example in other respects, however excellent,

(though

(though he speak with the tongue of men and angels, understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and bestow all his goods to feed the Poor) can have no real weight or influence whatever. It is pretty generally understood, that the determinations of the civil Courts have been for a long time uniformly in favour of the validity of certain agreements of this sort, as obligatory bargains between one man and another. On a more accurate inspection into this matter, it should seem that this uniformity is by no means such as hath been conceived. The points in issue on the several Precedents have been different; the opinions of great Lawyers have varied concerning them. Nevertheless the appearance of agreement in the several cases hath been such, as to lead to an opinion (even among Lawyers) that the validity of such bonds in law could no longer be disputed. The question itself was perhaps never directly agitated till very lately, when on a final hearing upon appeal, it was fully argued and determined otherwise.—The great authorities (and there were such) who contended against this last determination, admitted that, were the case a new one now to be decided for the first time, they would themselves pronounce differently

from the original Precedent on which all the subsequent decisions have rested. In fact they contended, that long and uniform practice, (which here they assumed without proof) may make that the Law which is most contradictory to its known spirit and intention.^E It should be remembered, however, that whatever might have been the fate of the question in the House of Lords, the situation of the Clergyman must have continued the same. Though such bargain were legally binding; could that consideration silence the conscience or alter the duty of a man who must personally engage by a subsequent stipulation before God, that he hath made no such bargain; and never will fulfill the terms of it, if it hath been made for him by any other person?—I have said thus much concerning Simoniacal *Bonds*, as that hath been the most usual and most successful method of trafficking in spiritual matters. It is not, however, the only method. Other artifices are too frequently resorted to for the purpose of negotiating the sale of Church Patronage; and
 converting

^E See this Case stated at large, with the arguments of the Judges and the debates of the Lords.—Cunningham's *Law of Simony*. Ch. xii. London, 1784. Sold by G. Robinson, Paternoster-Row.

converting that into property, which is in its nature no other than a confidential trust for the Public.—These artifices consequently, when discovered, bring no small inconvenience as well as infamy on the Patrons. In what light they place the character of a Clergyman I forbear to mention. The common trick of employing intermediate agents does not alter either the crime or legal penalties. If there be between any persons whatever pecuniary considerations in consequence of which a Presentation is obtained the Simony remains, though Patron or Presentee, or both be utterly ignorant of the transaction.* The chief encouragement to such attempts arises either from the supposed difficulty of obtaining formal proof of the fact, or else from a confidence that the Bishop will not be over-forward in subjecting himself to the expence and trouble necessarily attending frequent litigations of the kind. To the former of these suppositions I can speak from experience that in these cases, where the least suspicion hath arisen, it is much easier to detect such evidence as is wanted, than it possibly can be to conceal it.—As to the other, I can only say

* Law of Simony. Chap. IV.

say, if an attention to the great Duties of my Calling bring on private inconvenience to myself, there is no help for it; the inconvenience must be born.—I would farther recommend it to the serious consideration of every Clergyman, that it is not in the nature of things that any situation of his, however indigent and distressed, should be admitted in the sight of God or man, as the smallest justification of a conduct so complicately wicked as such traffick, on his part at least, most assuredly is.

THERE are other things which do not so nearly affect our character, as men of ingenuous integrity and moral strictness, which yet are worth attention.

Innovations.

IT is the fashion of the time to project changes and innovations in every department. Some of the Clergy have given too far into the general humour; and have expressed themselves uneasy for alterations in our established modes of Worship, in the translation of the Scriptures, and in the legal appointment of Ecclesiastic Revenues. Before they have any right to be listened to on these topics, it is incumbent on them to make it appear, that they have
done

done all the good that the Establishment as it now stands puts into their power; and that they could and would more effectually promote Evangelical Faith and Practice among men, if such changes were made. I am myself free to own, that I have considered again and again the laboured objections against our Liturgy; and the whole amount of them (if you except such as go to the essentials of Christian Doctrine, which, I presume, ought not to be given up) appears to me by no means sufficient, even if admitted, to justify any change at all. And after all the improvements in critical knowledge, and the varieties discovered in the Manuscripts of the original text of Scripture, and in the ancient Versions, I am glad to see incomparably the ablest Critic of the age contending strenuously for the general excellence of our present authorized Translation; and recommending at the utmost cautious corrections of particular passages. The prudence and judgment of this venerable Prelate furnish an admirable lesson to the forwardness of young proficients in Divinity.

THE source of our Revenues hath given Tythes occasion to much discussion of late years. It
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hath however lately appeared in a singular argument for altering them, that the aggregate quantity (if any provision at all is fit to be made for the establishment of a religious Ministry) can be liable to no just exception: even as there rated it is small in the extreme; and there is good reason to believe it is rated much beyond the truth. The clamour against Tythes hath been very loud, more loud than reasonable; as is generally the case in popular cries. It hath nevertheless been countenanced by men who ought to have been better advised. I do not mean to trouble you with canvassing minutely the whole of this subject. That a tenth part of the produce of the ground is a wise and equitable mode of provision for an established Ministry may be admitted on good authority, on the very best; even though we may not ourselves be able to point out all the advantages attending it. It hath however now in this country one advantage, which we can all understand, and ought to feel the importance of. It is a Right so firmly established, so interwoven in the original texture of our constitution, that the hand of power cannot violate it without endangering the rights and liberties of the whole Community. This could not be the
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case of any novel substitution set in its stead. Land is liable to infinite objections easily enough foreseen, and now beginning to be actually felt where it hath taken place. Any other commutation in the way of payment, if fairly made, will by no means answer the end of silencing clamour; since it is demonstrable, that it must lay a burthen on the land of the County at least one third heavier than what it now sustains under the right of Tythe.—For these reasons, and many others, I think it highly adviseable for us to rest satisfied as we are; not to be anxious to press changes which will be dangerous to ourselves, and can be beneficial to nobody.

I HAVE now gone over such points as from the general complexion of the Time seemed to call for some sort of notice. Some of them I have touched but lightly, leaving them as proper matter for more full discussion in my future communications with you. What I have most dwelt upon is that diligence and zeal in the care of your several Parishes, which is the only means of restoring Religion and good manners amongst us. Let none, I beseech you, think that the endeavour is desperate. It may not operate all at once and universally; but I will venture to

Conclusion,

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say with confidence, that every honest exertion in the service of our Great Master, uniformly and constantly persisted in, will not be without its effect.—Our good will and power in the attempt must proceed from him, for without him we can do nothing. The issue we may safely trust in *his* hands, who “*out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hath perfected strength;*” “*who can make even our strength perfect in weakness;*” “*from whom we have this treasure, (the Ministration of his Gospel) in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.*”

WITH such ground of confidence to rest upon, with such solemn professions of our own to bind us, any backwardness, any the smallest degree of slackness on our part, is a base desertion of the charge committed to us ; and leaves, as far as we are concerned, the Flock of Christ without protection, open to the attacks and delusions of their spiritual Enemy, to the uncontrouled violence of their own Passions, and to the seducing example of a careless World.

